

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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March 9, 2006

An Urgent Personal Letter from Congressman John Culberson to American Scientists and Engineers

Although the NASA budget proposed for Fiscal Year 2007 robustly funds our manned space program, and we need to be thankful for this, unfortunately, the 2007 budget also devastates NASA's scientific research and many important space science missions. The NASA 2007 budget cannibalizes \$3 billion of NASA'S scientific research and cancels missions like the Terrestrial Planet Finder (TPF), cuts the Astrobiology research program by 50% and cancels the long planned mission to Europa, which the National Academy of Sciences' Decadal Survey identified as the single highest priority mission to the outer planets. I personally made sure Congress enacted legislation last year directing NASA to start the Europa mission this year, but NASA ignored this specific Congressional directive and cancelled the Europa mission.

Eliminating virtually all scientific research funded by NASA and canceling the Europa mission is completely unacceptable to me, and I hope you will act now to help me restore funding for the Europa mission and space science research within NASA. Time is short. It is urgent that your letters and phone calls go out right away.

Start now by writing the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committees, Thad Cochran of Mississippi, and the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Jerry Lewis of California. Thank them for their strong support over the years for investing in the NSF and NASA, and ask them to move at least \$1 billion, or up to \$3 billion, more dollars into NASA by taking the money from the \$15 billion that Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has recommended be spent on federal programs that OMB admits are officially classified as "wasteful," "obsolete" or "duplicative." As an alternative or additional source of funds, you should ask them to move \$1 billion from the 2007 Budget request for Homeland Security and into NASA because Homeland Security has a surplus of at least \$6.8 billion sitting in the U.S. Treasury that was intended for first responders but has not been spent in over three years. In other words, make Homeland Security spend \$1 billion of their unspent surplus before we give them another \$1 billion, and use that \$1 billion now where it is needed most for the nation's security in the future - for scientific research and planetary exploration that NASA is now canceling.

Next, write the Appropriations NASA Subcommittee members and ask them to support restoration of the critical space science programs and projects that have been hit the hardest. Please begin with our top space mission priority: a request that the Appropriations Committee follow through on its promise last year to start the Europa mission this year with a \$30 million new start, and explain briefly why Europa is the highest priority of the Decadal Survey. Next, ask the Committee to protect full funding for the unmanned Mars

exploration program, the Space Interferometer Mission, (SIM), and ask them to put the Terrestrial Planet Finder Mission (TPF) mission back in the planning queue so that necessary technology development can continue. Finally, ask them to restore as much funding as possible to NASA's scientific research programs that have been cut by OMB.

Again, let me emphasize two things:

- The need for us all to support restoration of a healthy space science portfolio that contains more than Hubble and the Webb telescope and,
- Urgent action to provide the NASA Appropriations Subcommittee with additional funds – call or write today.

Please share my letter/email with every colleague, friend or family member who is willing to help with a similar letter, email, fax or phone call. Quick action is essential. It would also help me if you and everyone else shares a copy of your letter or email with me. It is very important to remember that you are writing to friends on these committees who have been strong supporters of NASA and scientific research. Thank them for their strong support over the years.

I am very grateful to you for your important work and your willingness to help persuade my fellow Appropriators to find more money for NASA's planetary exploration program and scientific research. Call me or my Legislative Director Ellie Essalih if you need help or more information. A list of the names and addresses of the key Appropriators you need to contact is attached. Good luck!



John Culberson
Member of Congress
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